

Ella Fitzgerald
The Harold Arlen Songbook
Volume 1



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Arranged and Conducted by Billy May

1	BLUES IN THE NIGHT	7:09
2	LET'S FALL IN LOVE	4:02
3	STORMY WEATHER	5:13
*4	SING MY HEART	2:45
5	BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA	2:22
6	MY SHINING HOUR	3:59
7	HOORAY FOR LOVE	2:42
8	THIS TIME THE DREAM'S ON ME	4:33
9	THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC	4:08
10	I'VE GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING	4:49
11	LET'S TAKE A WALK AROUND THE BLOCK	3:58
12	ILL WIND	3:49
13	AC-CENT-TCHU-ATE THE POSITIVE	3:38

Total Playing Time 53:43

*Additional Track on CD only



13 other timeless interpretations of Harold Arlen's songs are available on Ella Fitzgerald: The Harold Arlen Songbook, Vol. 2 (817 528-2)

the kind of work is different — but there is little inspiration in either. This song came at a moment when both song writers, Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen were particularly uninspired. They had been working hard on their songs for the film **Here Come The Waves** (1944) and needed another song to complete the score and found themselves at the point where just one more song would not materialize. So they decided to take a drive to get their minds off song writing. Mercer, a poker-faced pixie, suddenly asked Arlen to hum the tune “of that spiritual you’ve been saving.” Depressed, Arlen looked at the lyricist — hummed — and received some advice from Mercer vital to their current mental condition, “You’ve got to accentuate the positive,” he suggested. The line just happened to fit the music; it was enough to reawaken their creative instincts. By the time they had come back from their drive they had practically completed the new song. “It must have really pleased John,” Arlen recalls, “it was the first time I ever saw him smile.” The song went on to become one of their greatest hits. Happily, in this Fitzgerald-May version the generally neglected spiritual-like verse is sung. “She sings with deep emotion and great joy,” the composer finds. “We’d have more converts if we had Ella in the pulpit.”

Ella Fitzgerald

The Harold Arlen Songbook

Volume 1

Arranged and Conducted by Billy May

1	BLUES IN THE NIGHT (Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer) from Blues In The Night , film, 1941	7:09	9	THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC (Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer) from Star Spangled Rhythm , film, 1942	4:08
2	LET'S FALL IN LOVE (Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler) from Let's Fall In Love , film, 1934	4:02	10	I'VE GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING (Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler) from Cotton Club Parade , 1932	4:49
3	STORMY WEATHER (Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler) from Cotton Club Parade , 1933	5:13	11	LET'S TAKE A WALK AROUND THE BLOCK (Harold Arlen/Ira Gershwin/ E.Y. "Yip" Harburg) from Life Begins At 8:40 , 1934	3:58
*4	SING MY HEART (Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler) from Love Affair , film, 1939	2:45	12	ILL WIND (Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler) from Cotton Club Parade , 1934	3:49
5	BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA (Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler) from Cotton Club Rhythmania , 1931	2:22	13	AC-CENT-TCHU-ATE THE POSITIVE (Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer) from Here Come The Waves , film, 1944	3:38
6	MY SHINING HOUR (Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer) from The Sky's The Limit , film, 1943	3:59		Total Playing Time	53:43
7	HOORAY FOR LOVE (Harold Arlen/Leo Robin) from Casbah , film, 1948	2:42	*Additional Track on CD only		
8	THIS TIME THE DREAM'S ON ME (Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer) from Blues In The Night , film, 1941	4:33			

This album was conceived and produced by Norman Granz
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Rodgers & Hart Songbook, Vol. 2	821 580-2
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Complete personnel and soloists for these sessions have never been fully identified. Conversations with Billy May and other helpful sources have provided the following details:

Soloists:

Don Fagerquist, *trumpet* (**Ill Wind**)
Milt Bernhart or Dick Nash, *trombone* (**Let's Fall In Love, My Shining Hour**)
Benny Carter, *alto sax* (**Let's Fall In Love, Blues In The Night, This Time The Dream's On Me**)
Ted Nash, *alto sax* (**I've Got The World On A String**)
Plas Johnson, *tenor sax* (**That Old Black Magic**)
Larry Bunker, *vibes* (**Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea**)

Rhythm Section:

Paul Smith, *piano*, Al Hendrickson or John Collins, *guitar*, Joe Mondragon, *bass*, Alvin Stoller, *drums*

All tracks recorded at Radio Recorders in Los Angeles.

Hooray For Love, Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive, I've Got The World On A String recorded August 1, 1960

Sing My Heart, Let's Take A Walk Around The Block recorded August 2, 1960

That Old Black Magic, Blues In The Night, Stormy Weather, My Shining Hour, Ill Wind, This Time The Dream's On Me recorded January 14, 1961

Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea, Let's Fall In Love recorded January 16, 1961



The following liner notes by Benny Green and Edward Jablonski were originally written for a 2 LP-set. This material is being released for the first time on CD in two separate volumes. Consequently, titles mentioned in the text may, in fact, appear on the companion volume (Ella Fitzgerald: The Harold Arlen Songbook, Vol. 2, 817 528-2).

ABOUT ELLA FITZGERALD . . .

The story goes that the sculptor Pygmalion created the statue of a woman so delectable that he fell hopelessly in love with it, whereupon the goddess Aphrodite took pity on the artist, who had once been one of her most ardent admirers, and breathed life into the marble, which then became transformed into a ravishing young lady called Galatea. One presumes they lived happily ever after. After all it is not every man who gets the chance to build his own wife, and the thought has often occurred to me that had Pygmalion been a songwriter he would have imbued his Galatea with the voice of Ella Fitzgerald, for reasons which will be clear to every man who has ever tried his hand at a rhyming couplet.

Inside the mind of every songwriter lies the Platonic ideal of every piece he ever composed, a perfect version of each song as it was originally conceived. Of all the vocalists in the field, Ella Fitzgerald is better equipped than any to breathe life into those Platonic ideals and make them actualities. That is why if you were to ask all the great songwriters who they would prefer to interpret their tunes, practically all of them would plump for Ella Fitzgerald. I have been pondering for months now on what a tragedy it is that George Gershwin was never able to hear Ella's faultless five-album set of the maestro's music.

Her version of the Harold Arlen Song Book represents what may be the last stage in one of the most astonishing marathons in the history of re-

corded music. In the last five years Ella has created a reference library of the popular song which is so different in character from anything else in the world of popular music that there is literally nothing with which it can be compared. The quality song of the last thirty years is a distinctive product indigenous to American life, and the moment in a listening career when one suddenly discovers the felicitous lyric, the sinuous melody, the delightful wedding of the two, is never forgotten. What these Song Books have done, apart from simplifying the task of building a tabulated library of the best songs, is to define the art of the Popular Song once and for all.

The artist who presents the work of this or that composer must possess certain peculiar qualities. First she must have a wide vocal range, because most of the songs she sings will be show tunes, which means that their range will vary as widely as their character, for they will have been conceived originally for various roles in a drama.

She must also have the kind of vocal personality which can at times submerge itself in the material being used. This is the vital quality of Ella's Song Books which has made them inimicable. Despite her flawless technique and the huge span of her powers of interpretation, Ella in the Song Books uses herself as she might a musical instrument, so that while the voice itself is eloquent, the woman behind it becomes quite self-effacing. This is the great paradox in the interpretation of a worthy popular song. By acknowledging that in

this series it is the musical material which is the star of the show, Ella has produced album after album to delight the connoisseur of light verse with music.

The show tune is a fragile thing. Without luck it may never see the light of day at all, no matter what its virtues. (Those who may be skeptical on this point are advised to read up on the production history of *The Man I Love*, one of the most disheartening episodes in popular art). Even if a song succeeds in becoming part of a successful show, its life is never very long, unless it happens to become that indefinable property, the Standard. The show closes, perhaps there is a screen version, and then the score subsides into the past, forgotten except for an odd cabaret act or two which happens to find something in the situation of the lyric which is apposite to the feel of the act. Time and again on these recordings Ella has demonstrated the aesthetic injustice of this process. Those people responsible for the background work to these sessions have performed diligent research, resuscitating the corpses of numbers which should never have been allowed to die. I can still savour the rapture which I first received Ella's versions of Irving Berlin's *You're Laughing at Me*, Gershwin's *Lorelei*, Cole Porter's *I Am in Love*, Richard Rodgers' *A Ship Without a Sail*. And this collection of Harold Arlen's best work includes at least two pleasant surprises of that nature, **Hooray for Love** and **Let's Take a Walk Around the Block**, with the sparkling urban wit of their lyrics.

I believe that in the life of every musician there is a King Charles' Head of some kind, and

mine has always been the status of the popular song, the fact that its lyrics can comprise charming, artistic light verse and its melodies cultured and vital musical patterns. Most important of all, the popular song as we know it today is one of the diverse, offspring of jazz music, which is why the best interpretations of great standards are always achieved by those artists with real affinities to the jazz art. I am not thinking at the moment of the actual improvisations on tracks like **Blues in the Night** and **Stormy Weather**, but of versions which obey the letter as well as the spirit of the original text. Now it so happens that in this collection of Arlen's work there is one track which obsessed me from the first hearing, for it contains precisely that kind of artistry subtle enough to be overlooked by all but the most discerning and fanatical for the cause.

When I hear something like Ella's **Written in the Stars**, I am filled again with one of the passionate desires of adolescence, the ambition to write something as good myself. The madness usually lasts about a week and then gradually subsides until the next time somebody like Ella reminds me of what the feeling is like. **Written in the Stars** is one of those perfect marriages of words and music which happen far less often than people imagine, and it is in her treatment of his marriage that Ella exhibits the qualities which no other singer possesses quite to the same degree.

Her slight but cunning embellishment of phrases like "it shall be done," "by my side" and "in your hand" are examples of the way in which she lends the technique and experience of a lifetime to the interpretation of worthy material which but

for her might never have been revived at all. In all those aspiring phrases, "it shall be done," "you are the one" and "I'll never be free," she takes the last note as an instrumentalist would take it, not hitting it flush in the face but approaching it with due consideration for the sentiment the lyric is trying to express as well as the actual sound of the words. It is at moments like these when every aspiring composer or lyricist knows he will never really die happy unless one day Ella sings at least one of his songs on at least one public occasion.

I have referred already to the fact that work of the quality of Arlen and Robin's **Written in the Stars** achieves the status of light verse. Sometimes when I make that claim, bigoted eyebrows start to climb high brows. The definition is apt nonetheless, and it seems that Ella appreciates it instinctively if not consciously. When she sings the cadence

Cloudy though the day be,
Crazy though I may be,
What the stars foretold shall be.

she is producing vocal performances of work far too good to be dismissed with a contemptuous sniff. In her rendering of the phrase she employs those lilting effects in her voice which imbue the whole with the qualities of a lullaby.

It is therefore most appropriate that in the song which I suppose has a higher poetic content than any other on this album, **Over the Rainbow**, Ella has to sing the actual word "lullaby." It is fascinating to watch her bring out the onomatopoeic properties of that very lovely word, possibly without having thought of doing any such thing. Arlen wrote a daring octave jump in

the very first bar of **Over the Rainbow**, and problems of execution like this are dismissed almost contemptuously by Ella because of her impeccable command and phenomenal range. If Judy Garland's historic version of **Over the Rainbow** contained all the romantic fervour of adolescence, dare I suggest that Ella's has far more of the dreamlike sensibilities of childhood?

Through a great deal of Arlen's work, particularly his ballads, runs a distinct bluesy strain, usually effected by the use of flattened thirds and sevenths, as in "Sun" on the phrase "When the sun goes down" and "blow away" in **Ill Wind**, which brings me to a most important point. For an entirely satisfactory treatment of Arlen's music, you have to use jazz musicians. I am so completely convinced about this that even if Harold Arlen himself were to scoff at the idea, I would beg his pardon and start trying to convert him.

The choice of Billy May as arranger and conductor for the session was a very happy one, because May went through the sideman's mill years ago with Charlie Barnet and Glenn Miller. Apart from his all-around orchestral skill, May is capable of writing the perfect backing for a jazz soloist, as witness the superbly balanced melodic cushion he provides for Don Fagerquist's trumpet solo in **As Long as I Live**, and his outstanding paraphrase of Arlen's original melody in the bridge passage of the same tune, where the orchestra produces that restraint implying tremendous underlying power which reminds one of a band like Count Basie's.

On some tracks one hears the elegant echo of an earlier day in jazz. **Blues in the Night**,

This Time the Dream's On Me and **Let's Fall in Love** all show, through the agency of Benny Carter's alto saxophone, the amazing durability as creative artists, of so many men from the prewar Swing era. And in fine contrast are the alto solos, different from Carter's but just as surely integrated into the whole, of Ted Nash on **Get Happy**, **When the Sun Comes Out** and **I've Got the World on a String**. Ella is at home with this kind of jazz playing, and must have revelled in this whole production, which contains rather more free improvisation than most of the previous Song Books.

Just how monumental the Song Book series will become nobody can be too sure, but something another singer once said to me about them is very significant. At a recent press reception I talked to Mitzi Gaynor about her album of Ira Gershwin lyrics, and asked her if she intended following up with something of Hart's or Porter's or Berlin's. She smiled a little apologetically and said, "I doubt it. There aren't many good songs left to discover now. Ella has produced all the definitive editions."

The definitive editions. It is a phrase worth lingering over, because it begins to convey something of the magnitude of Ella Fitzgerald's wonderful achievement in her treatment of the best work of America's most gifted composers.

Benny Green
THE OBSERVER, London



ABOUT HAROLD ARLEN...

To the many who do not take their light music lightly Harold Arlen belongs in that special niche reserved for such truly great composers of the American musical theater as Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, George Gershwin and Vincent Youmans. This is exalted company, indeed, and possibly the only dissenting voice that might be heard questioning Harold Arlen's presence in it would be his own. His innate modesty, his natural shyness, have contributed to undeserved anonymity, the wide and lasting popularity of many of his songs have never made the name of Harold Arlen the household term it might be if it were less self-effacing. His work, he feels, sings his praises for him.

Harold Arlen's story differs from that of his peers in that when he started out on a career in music he had no intention of becoming a composer. Born in Buffalo, N.Y. on February 15, 1905, the son of the celebrated Cantor Samuel Arluck, he experienced music in his home practically from birth. When he was seven he was singing in his father's choir in the synagogue. His father's singing made a lasting impression on Hyman (as he was then known), who was later to refer to the cantor as "the greatest theme and variations man I ever heard." Many a characteristic Arlen melody, particularly those of an almost improvisational, melismatic, nature are memorable tributes to the memory of the composer's father. In later years Cantor Arluck returned the tributes, at the same

time delighting his congregation when he sang liturgical texts to his son's melodies during services, in Temple Adath Yeshurun in Syracuse, N.Y.

By the time Hyman grew into his teens, there were other musical forces at work on the cantor's son. He avidly listened to recordings and radio broadcasts by such jazz bands as The Memphis Five, the Ben Pollack Band with Benny Goodman broadcasting from Chicago, as well as the blues records of Bessie Smith and others. If any jazz artists appeared in Buffalo, young Hyman Arluck never failed to hear them.

His mother, Celia, initiated his taking piano lessons. Her wish was that he might become a music teacher (his father was hoping for a doctor), keep his own hours, and thus be able to observe the Sabbath properly. Music became a powerful obsession, but of a decided secular cast. Although he seriously and obediently studied the piano (with Arnold Cornelissen, one of Buffalo's finest musicians), young Hyman soon branched out as a performer: he sang and played in the school assemblies, he played the piano, and later the organ, in local movie houses, and finally took an important step at the age of fifteen by forming his own band "The Snappy Trio."

The Trio got a job in a tough cafe in Buffalo's red-light district. Hyman's school work suffered accordingly. He was, however, the only fifteen year old in the neighborhood to own a sporty Model-T Ford. This hardly impressed Cantor Arluck, who curiously, did not object as much to his son's musical activity (however scarlet) as to his educational inactivity.

For The Snappy Trio Hyman wrote the ar-

rangements (inspired by those he had heard played by his jazz heroes), sang and also played the piano. The size of the band grew with its popularity and when it became "The Southbound Shufflers," worked on the lake steamers plying the waters between Buffalo and Canada.

Soon Hyman Arluck was snatched up by the more enterprising "Yankee Six," which he joined in his usual triple role. This group rapidly expanded into "The Buffalodians," a sizable band that toured the hinterlands and arrived in New York, mid-roar in the Jazz Age — 1925. Band-leader Arnold Johnson soon spotted the young singer-pianist-arranger, by then known as Harold Arluck, and signed him for his band. The Johnson orchestra appeared in the Park Central Hotel, on the air, and in the pit for the GEORGE WHITE SCANDALS OF 1928. The young ex-Buffalodian particularly enjoyed this last, for he was given the chance to sing between the acts.

Eventually he tired of the grind of arranging and playing, quit the Johnson band and struck out on his own in vaudeville. By this time his name was evolved to Harold Arlen (a combination of the initial sound of his father's name, and his mother's maiden name — Orlin).

His next professional step was a bid from Vincent Youmans to appear in the latter's musical GREAT DAY in the singing role of "Cokeo Joe." Curiously it was this first big break in show business that ended Arlen's career as a singer and catapulted him into composing.

One day in the summer of 1929 Arlen was asked to fill in for Fletcher Henderson, who was ill, as pianist for the dancers. Unable to play the

same old thing all day, Arlen amused himself by tossing off variations on the vamp (the signal for the dancers to get ready). With each variation the original "pickup" developed into a distinctive melodic idea. The show's choral director, Will Marion Cook, a composer himself and Arlen's good friend, suggested that he make a song of the one time vamp. Another friend, also a composer, Harry Warren agreed. He also introduced Harold Arlen to lyricist Ted Koehler who devised a lyric and a title for the song, **Get Happy**. This was Arlen's first professional song — and his first hit. Its impact in fact led to his signing a contract with a publisher and ended his singing career.

With Ted Koehler as collaborator, Arlen went on to do the outstanding songs for a series of unique Cotton Club shows for the celebrated Harlem night club. The openings of these historic productions were attended with all the glitter and excitement of a Broadway show. As produced by Dan Healy, the Cotton Club shows were remarkably paced, and as scored by Arlen and Koehler graced with some of the most memorable songs of the Thirties.

After several Broadway successes, Harold Arlen, in the middle of the Thirties, moved to Hollywood, then dispensing frothy, tuneful, entertainment that everyone could afford. The depression inhibited the production of musicals on Broadway, the exodus to The Coast was on. Collaborating with lyricists E. Y. Harburg, Johnny Mercer, Ira Gershwin, Leo Robin, Ralph Blane, Dorothy Fields — and again with Ted Koehler — Harold Arlen composed some of the finest songs to come out of Hollywood. Rarely, however, did the film

come up to the level of the songs — there were, happily, such exceptions as the classic THE WIZARD OF OZ, CABIN IN THE SKY, and Judy Garland's A STAR IS BORN.

Nor did Arlen remain away from Broadway during his Hollywood stay, with Harburg he did the scores for HOORAY FOR WHAT (1937) and BLOOMER GIRL (1944). With Mercer he supplied the songs for the beautiful ST. LOUIS WOMAN. After completing two film scores with Ira Gershwin, Arlen returned to New York to collaborate with Truman Capote on one of his finest scores, HOUSE OF FLOWERS (1954), with E. Y. Harburg on JAMAICA (1957) and Johnny Mercer on SARATOGA (1959). Still to be produced in this country is the magnificently scored BLUES OPERA with lyrics by Johnny Mercer.

Arlen's lyricists agree that putting words to his melodies is a challenge, for an Arlen melody is never common, never run-of-the-mill. Their very uniqueness demands an excellent lyric. Harold Arlen has been fortunate in having worked with the finest lyricists, with typical self-effacement he will often credit the popularity of one of his songs to the lyric. Whatever the reason for the song's popularity and long-life, it can be taken for granted that it will be fashioned with the touch of a master, in the work of Harold Arlen, popular song writing reaches the level of art.

Art is a word rarely applied to popular song, but in the hands of its few great practitioners, it turns out to be just that. In its way the good American popular song is at once a kind of folk song and liedier. The supreme interpretation

of this special form lies in the province of the peerless Ella Fitzgerald. "She is unique," Harold Arlen has said of her. "Her style is unlike anyone else's — she stands alone while most everyone else is derivative. She has sung songs and made them irresistibly attractive. The glory of this is the astonishing fact that she has reached such an amazingly large audience, which again proves to me that an artist can retain his — or her — naturalness without heeding the common cry, 'It ain't commercial!' Her voice, her style, are pure unadulterated American, her phrasing impeccable — she improvises playfully and with more fluidity than most instrumentalists."

The songs of Harold Arlen are woven into the musical fabric of the American tradition, so much so, in fact, that we tend to take them for granted — as if they have always existed. He takes his work seriously; he is a careful, hard-working, craftsman whose unique skill has enriched our popular music immeasurably. His approach cannot but result in art; in addition, like our "serious" composers, he used the devices of our folk music in his composition — although not self-consciously. In Europe, incidentally, many of his songs are accepted as folk songs and performed in orchestral suites with the usual "Traditional" in the program credits rather than the name of Harold Arlen.

Arlen's craftsmanship accounts in part for the excellence of his songs. He manages to strike that delicate balance between the intellectual and the intuitive in his work — which makes his songs at once appealing to the greater public because of their simple directness, and to the trained musician

because of the skillfully handled techniques. Arlen's employment of American sounds in the shape and often the exquisite detail of his melodies, in the haunting blue coloring of his harmonies, and in the wit and joy of his rhythms, assures him a unique position among his peers: he is the most American of them all. It is fitting that he should have identified this very same quality in the singing of Ella Fitzgerald preserved in this wonderful collection of Arleniana, as the composer said with a pleased simplicity, "All the years these songs have been wandering and here they've come home to roost."

Edward Jablonski
Author of *Harold Arlen:
Happy With The Blues*
(Doubleday & Co., 1961)



BLUES IN THE NIGHT

In all of his work Harold Arlen strives for variety and authenticity and, while he has written remarkably diversified songs, some of the so called blues songs he has written have led to his being mistakenly typed as a composer of blues. "I don't think it fair," Irving Berlin has said, "that some people type him as a blues writer. He has written some of the most beautiful ballads we have." But Arlen's early reputation as a composer for the Cotton Club (for which he wrote few if any blues) has stuck. When he finally decided to compose a blues for the film that came to be titled for the song, Arlen literally locked himself away in his study and studied authentic blues recordings until he felt he had captured what he calls "the authentic ring" of the folk form. In two days he emerged from his study with "Blues In The Night," which is based upon the twelve-bar structure of the blues. Johnny Mercer gave it a fine lyric, the song was introduced in the film, **Blues In The Night** (1941), and has been around ever since. The composer was delighted with the handling of the song. "There is a most interesting introductory tease which tantalizes and then Ella starts singing in her inimitable style." Her lovely singing of it inspired another observation by the composer, "This proves she is the only vocalist who can sing the most complicated phrases in the most effortless way."

LET'S FALL IN LOVE

This title song from the first film score by Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler was written in a men's room. The composer happened to be in the office of an agency when the teletype brought the news that the picture for which he and Koehler were to write the songs, would be titled **Let's Fall in Love**. It

gave him an idea so he excused himself, sought out the only unoccupied place in the vicinity, and jotted down the first few bars of "Let's Fall in Love." The film itself, released in 1934, caused little cinematic stir, but the song has endured. It's rendition in this album touched the composer, who said, "Tender is also the word for Ella."

STORMY WEATHER

Written for the Cotton Club **Parade** (1933), "Stormy Weather" became an overnight hit because of a recording made by the composer with the orchestra of Leo Reisman. Now one of the acknowledged classics of the depression years, "Stormy Weather" was practically tossed off between sandwiches by Arlen and Koehler one day in the composer's apartment in New York's Croydon Hotel. When it took fire they realized what they had and even wrote a special interlude for it which is rarely heard and does not appear in all the printed versions of the song. Ella Fitzgerald sings it on this recording ("I walk around/Heavy hearted and sad...") about which the composer said, "I never thought that after the pommelling 'Stormy' has taken over the years that I'd be able to sit and hear it as if for the first time."

SING MY HEART

This song, with lyrics by Ted Koehler, was written for and introduced in the 1939 RKO film, **Love Affair**. It was sung by Irene Dunne and as critic Stanley Green notes, it was "buoyant advice to take love lightly."

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA

During the period that Arlen and Ted Koehler worked on their songs for **Rhythmia**, their second Cotton Club show (1931), the composer was appearing at the Palace Theater doing a vocal turn at the piano and also accompanying Lyda Roberti. To get their job done the songwriters met at the Palace where they worked on their score; "Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea," therefore, was written on the stage of the Palace Theater. Harold Arlen's comment on hearing Ella Fitzgerald sing this song: "Diverting as a kitten, moving as a child."

MY SHINING HOUR

One of the lesser films for which Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer concocted fine songs was **The Sky's The Limit** (1943), which had the good fortune to star Fred Astaire. "My Shining Hour" was the film's ballad; it is pure and it is simple and one of the rare Arlen melodies written in the conventional thirty-two bar song form. "It just happened to fall that way," he will explain.

HOORAY FOR LOVE

Like Harold Arlen Leo Robin is a craftsman always striving for perfection. When they collaborated on **Casbah** (1948) Robin habitually submitted his lyrics to Arlen with the cautious reminder that he was to consider them only as dummy lyrics. "But somehow," Arlen recalls, "they always turned out to be the ones we used." In the case of "Hooray For Love," Robin received a mild shock when he realized that every line in the refrain of the song ended with the words "for love." The lyricist, harboring a prejudice against monotony, was

surprised that Arlen did not object to the repetition. Leo Robin feels that this may be because "the rhymes come where the ear expects them to be." Whatever his misgivings about the song, it has proved to be the most popular written for **Casbah**. When Harold Arlen heard the present recording his comment was a succinct "Hooray for Ella!"

THIS TIME THE DREAM'S ON ME

Working with Johnny Mercer has always proved diverting for Arlen. Once the songs for a film (in this case **Blues in the Night**) were blocked out Mercer would come around the Arlen house for an hour or so a day and while resting on a couch would listen as the composer played. When Arlen finished playing the songs, Mercer would simply get up without a comment and disappear for a week or two. When he came around again he would bring the usually completed lyrics with him. His remarkable, retentive, memory held the melodies while he worked on the lyrics. Of Arlen he has said, "He is probably our most original composer; he often uses very odd rhythms, which make it difficult . . . for a lyric writer."

THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC

Of Johnny Mercer Harold Arlen has said, "I don't care what you give him, he'll find a way to save it, to help you." In referring to "That Old Black Magic," the composer has expanded on this statement by saying that "Without the lyric it would be just another long song. The words sustain the interest, make sense, contain memorable phrases and tell a story." As compared to the typical 32-bar song, "That Old Black Magic" is unusually long in its 72 bars; it rises to an

effective climax musically for Arlen has carefully indicated, as is his usual habit, those points in the printed music. Such musical subtleties are given due attention by Miss Fitzgerald and Billy May. "When she lets loose the unexpected vocal chuckles," Harold Arlen notes, "the effect is electrically instrumental."

I'VE GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING

Ted Koehler supplied the spirited lines to this song that has been very much alive since it was introduced in the 1932 Cotton Club **Parade**. It is another very un-bluesy song written for the Cotton Club. It is a curious fact that, considering the reputation the songwriters earned as blues writers from their Cotton Club scores, only one song — "Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea" — even employed the word blue in the title. But so much for semantics. It was the singing of "I've Got The World On A String" that prompted Harold Arlen to observe "In Ella's singing the glides and jumps are as graceful as a dance by Astaire; the genius of both could easily work together."

LET'S TAKE A WALK AROUND THE BLOCK

Although he had been writing full scores for the Cotton Club, contributed songs to revues, and did his first full book show score for **You Said It** in 1931, Harold Arlen's first truly full score was written for the highly successful revue, **Life Begins at 8:40**. It was produced in August, 1934, just five months after the production of his last Cotton Club show. **Life Begins** was a historic show for many reasons, but most important to the composer was the chance to collaborate with lyricists

E. Y. "Yip" Harburg and Ira Gershwin. Although he had been a practicing composer for a mere four years Harold Arlen turned out one of his most rounded scores ("and not one blues in it," he will point out) for a most important production by the Shuberts. Of course, lyricists Gershwin and Harburg were at their satirical best as in this depression inflected "Let's Take a Walk Around the Block." It is also typical of the Gershwin-Harburg approach to the love song, which together and individually they like to handle with tongue-in-cheek obliquity — and, of course, finely detailed technical dexterity. "Ella's singing of 'Walk,' " the composer happily observed, "proves she can sing a song with delightful simplicity and treat the lyricists with great — and due — respect."

ILL WIND

This song, with lyric by Ted Koehler, was written for his and Arlen's last Cotton Club show together, the **Parade** of 1934. After completing the songs Arlen began work with Ira Gershwin and E. Y. Harburg on **Life Begins at 8:40**, and then moved to Hollywood. "Ill Wind" came as a melodic fragment while the composer was visiting at the home of Anya Taranda, a beautiful young model who was later to become Mrs. Harold Arlen. The song naturally means a great deal to both Arlens; Ella Fitzgerald's lovely singing of it was described by the composer as "ever sensitive — never strident."

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